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SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON

FROSLKE

17 April 1972

Major General Vernon A. Walters



Dear Dick:

My cup runneth over! I requested your thoughts on the next Chief of Staff and received over 800 letters! Your wise and forth-right responses helped me a great deal in making my recommendation to Mel Laird. Of even greater significance, they gave me an insight as to how you, the leaders of the Army, look at the Army and what your aspirations are for the Army.

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Recently, Westy and I testified before four Congressional committees. In the vernacular of the day -- there was good news and bad news.

First, the good news. Without exception, they all believe that the Army is moving in the right direction. Problems? Of course! But all trend lines are positive. There is a recognition that where the Army is today is not as important as where it is going -- and the Army has developed sound programs to insure continued movement towards a zero draft Army. Most expressed for the record their recognition of the importance of the Army and their willingness to help the favorable trends continue. Our soldier oriented FY 1973 budget was well received by the Congressmen.

Now, the bad news. It came through loud and clear that most of them think we are guilty of gold plating weapons systems. They were not a bit shy in stating that the main battle tank which they killed last session cost too much and that the Army should have killed it itself. Many expressed similar reactions to the cost of the CHEYENNE. We must work harder to balance requirements and costs. I know this is a tough assignment, but the message is clear -- unit costs are of great concern to the Congress. We presently are developing new requirements for a less expensive tank.

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Another aspect of the CHEYENNE discussion disturbs me. Too many people are trying to use this weapons system as a catalyst to a roles and missions battle. Whether or not the CHEYENNE is the attack helicopter which the Army needs is debatable. It is not debatable whether the Army needs an attack helicopter for close air support. If we allow this discussion to turn into a public roles and missions squabble, the Army and the Air Force will both be the losers.

Many in Congress still think we have far too many general officers and soldiers in headquarters and support units and I think we probably could and will cut down on both. However, their visions of huge reductions just aren't realistic. Our job is to articulate realism in a manner which will be understood.

Finally, there is still much to be done to convince Congress that personnel turbulence within the Army must be stopped. I think turbulence is our number one problem and have pleaded with Congress to give us just one year to catch our breath. I'm not sure that I've made the sale -- and the fact that this is an election year doesn't make me feel any easier!

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I'm closing this letter with a challenge. A recent study of the attitudes of young people indicates that they join the Army to acquire work skills and experience that will benefit them later in civilian life. They also expect their Army experience to give them maturity, self-discipline, the ability to get along with people, and the challenge of facing up to important and meaningful tasks, such as defending their country. To put it another way, young people won't enlist or reenlist unless they see an opportunity for job satisfaction.

Whether or not the personnel turbulence decreases, we, the Army's leadership, must accept the challenge -- can we provide the imaginative, dynamic and human leadership which is necessary to ensure job satisfaction to our intelligent and well-motivated young people? I hope so because without this kind of leadership there is no way to attain the Army for which you and I aspire.

Sincerely,



Robert F. Froehlke